

REMARKS

This application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

The Official Action rejects claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Underlying this rejection is identified language in claims 1 and 5.

Applicants have amended claim in line with the helpful recommendations made in the Official Action.

As to claim 5, the Official Action suggests that a Markush form is more appropriate for such a recited list of alternative features. The Official Action also interprets the three- and four-letter designations for types of steel as abbreviations, and asks that they be replaced by that which the abbreviations represent.

Applicants have amended claim 5 to adopt the Markush form, as suggested.

As to the letter designations for the types of steel, applicants note that these are designations under the Japanese JIS standard for steel types. As such, they represent codes, not abbreviations. Accordingly, applicants have instead amended the claim to make clear that the identified codes represent JIS classifications. This amendment is believed to have the desired effect of rendering the claim definite, by distinctly identifying the subject matter of the claim.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action provisionally rejects claim 1 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claim 1 of copending application 10/720,537. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested for the following reasons:

The Official Action states that the difference between the two claims is that in the claim of the present application the cooling takes place at  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ , which is more specific than the  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$  of the applied claim 1. Applicants respectfully suggest that the differences between the claims in question is considerably more significant. Below is a tabular representation of the claims in question, with blank lines inserted for purpose of alignment.

Present Application	10/720,537
1. (currently amended) A solution casting process comprising steps of: casting dope including polymer and solvent on a support in <del>forming</del> <u>a form of a bead</u> of said dope by use of a flow casting die, to form gel film; stripping said gel film from said support by use of a stripping roller, to obtain polymer film; and	1. A solution casting process comprising steps of:  casting dope on to a support by use of at least one solution casting die, to form self-supporting cast film, said dope including polymer and solvent; stripping said self-supporting cast film from said support; drying said self-supporting cast film by use of a drier while said self-supporting cast film being stripped is fed by at least one feed roller, to form

cooling a surface of said support at -10°C or lower.	polymer film; wherein a surface temperature of said feed roller is set equal to or lower than 0°C., whereby said self-supporting cast film upon being stripped has modulus of longitudinal elasticity equal to or more than 450,000 Pa.
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The differences between the two claims include at least the following:

- The present claim recites that the stripping step is performed using a stripping roller, while the '537 claim makes no such requirement.

- The '537 claim includes a drying step that has no equivalent in the present claim, which step explicitly recites the use of a feed roller.

- The final step of the present claim recites a temperature range of the support, which is first recited in the casting step. In significant contrast, the final step of the '537 claim recites not only a different temperature range, but such temperature is defined in the context of the feed roller. The feed roller is first recited in the drying step, which finds no equivalent in the present claim.

For all of these reasons, applicants respectfully suggest that the present claim 1 does not constitute an obvious variation of the subject matter of claim 1 of the '537

application. As such, there exists no reason to require separate patents including the respective claims to be commonly owned and to have a common expiration date.

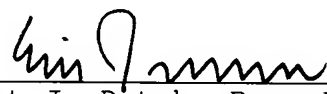
The Official Action includes no other rejections or objections on the merits. Therefore, in light of the amendments made above and the analysis provided, applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions or requires further clarification of any of the above points, the Examiner may contact the undersigned attorney so that this application may continue to be expeditiously advanced.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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